



Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

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VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL Minutes of Meeting dated March 28, 2018

Community Voice Channel Conference Room
105 Notch Road
Bolton, Connecticut

Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Elaine Buchardt, Andover; Justin Waine, Ellington.

Attending Guests: Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director; Matt Skane, Manager Government & Regulatory Affairs for Comcast

1. **Call to Order. Review of last meeting.** Paul Batterson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Community Voice Channel Meeting Room. Elaine Buchardt made a motion, seconded by Justin Waine, to approve the October 4, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Comcast Report** – Matt Skane, provided a handout updating Comcast community relations activities which included opening up more than 127,000 Xfinity Wi-Fi spots in New England and New York, free of charge, to help residents, emergency personnel, customers and non-customers stay connected, and establishing a comprehensive Olympics destination with X1 for the first time in the Winter Olympics. He noted that Comcast Western New England was named one of the Best Places to Work in Connecticut by Hartford Business Journal. The handout also including program notes filed with PURA in December, 2017 and February, 2018.

Matt was asked to go over how Comcast contracts with the various channels offered in their lineup. He said they contract with various programmers, paying them to carry their channels. They negotiate with them, taking into consideration their base of customers and what they want to be able to watch. On Comcast's website, people can see what contracts are currently up for negotiation.

The Board held a general discussion about revenue streams for cable channels, internet speeds, and data caps.

Justin Waine talked about the experience he had recently with renewing his contract. He said he finds that the packages offered tend to vary depending on the customer service person one speaks to. Matt Skane encouraged him to complete the survey Comcast provides. This will help them meet their goals to improve customer service.

3. **CVC Report** – Nick Lavigne reported on activities since the last VACAC meeting. The gala held in November went well, with total sales around \$12,000. In December, the CVC held their annual Meet Santa Claus event which had 110 kids and 70 families.

Nick Lavigne said he started contacting the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving this past September for a grant for new equipment. This has moved along quickly. As of today, he said all of the paperwork has been submitted to the Foundation. He gave an overview of the process involved

and the requirements for submittals. Nick said he asked for \$151,000, plus a few other figures. This would be for a new control room, cameras, a switcher, and various related equipment. He took a modular system approach.

Elaine Buchardt said she expects the CVC will receive the grant. She said the Foundation held a listening tour to learn what people needed and she volunteered to record a portion of their tour. She has learned that the Foundation wants to give to Public Access programming. It was also noted that the Foundation is connected to many philanthropists directly, and if they cannot find a way to give through the Foundation, it is not uncommon for them to steer people to them.

Paul Batterson asked Nick Lavigne if a show is recorded at the CVC, who owns it? Nick Lavigne said the person putting the show together owns it. The CVC does contract to receive 5 percent of a film's profit if it is sold, as they have provided the use of their equipment.

Nick Lavigne said they just held their annual Meet the Easter Bunny event last Saturday. It went well, drawing 77 kids and 56 families.

4. **Surplus Distribution** – Paul Batterson noted the VACAC currently has over \$5,000 in their account and brought up a discussion about offering scholarships again next year (as it did a few years ago) for public high school students in their catchment area. This would be for Bolton, Rockville, Tolland, Ellington, and RHAM High School students. They discussed offering five \$1,000 scholarships. Elaine Buchardt noted she had attended one of the award programs when the VACAC offered them before, and it was just one of hundreds of awards offered. Justin Waine suggested they hold an awards ceremony at the CVC for the students receiving the scholarships to make it more personalized and so they can get a better understanding of what the CVC is all about and what it has to offer.
5. **Website** – Paul Batterson said he has not been looking at the site for some time and asked if they should do something more with it. Presently they pay \$150 a year for their web-posting company, Computer Rescue to oversee it. Justin Waine offered to take a look at the site. Paul provided him with the username and password.
6. **Treasurer's Report** – Paul Batterson provided copies of the income and expenses report showing activity from January 1, 2016 through March 28, 2018. There were no unusual expenses. The current balance is \$5,144.54.
7. **Meeting Schedule** – There was consensus that although Matt Skane can only attend two meetings a year, that the VACAC should meet more frequently. The Board agreed on a quarterly schedule and to inform Matt about each meeting. He could come to the spring and fall meetings, or whichever ones would be best for him. The Board set their next meeting for Wednesday, June 13, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the CVC Conference Room.

Justin Waine made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Elaine Buchardt at 8:22 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary